

## **What Will Grow Here?**

Guided meditation by Denise Mainquist

After a long journey, whether to the desert or the inner self, we may experience intense emotions ranging from despair and futility to elation. We may be hungry and thirsty after our long journey or feeling the need to grow in a new way. This simple drawing exercise can help to focus thoughts, understand emotions, and see a beautiful way forward.

Participants will need colored pens, crayons or markers and a large piece of drawing paper.

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Take a few moments to breathe. Center. Put your feet on the floor if you are able.

Visualize a tiny seed sprouting in the earth. Watch as that tiny sprout begins to stretch and grow, breaking through the surface of the earth. Feel the roots going deeper, anchoring the sprout, and bringing water and nutrients to the young sprout. Maybe you feel roots connecting your feet to the ground.

What will this seed grow into? Something beautiful to look at? Something that will nourish you? A flower? A tree? Grass? Will there be many brightly colored flowers on the plant? Or are the flowers barely noticeable? What kinds of seeds does the plant produce? Seeds that float on the wind? Or seeds that have a tough outer coating that must be broken down? Does the plant have fruits? Are the fruits sweet or sour? Are they poisonous? Or does the plant reproduce by sending off shoots from its roots? What benefits does the plant provide to the earth, to air, to animals, to insects or to people?

Now that the sprout has broken through the ground, it reaches toward the sunlight. It is warmed and begins to experience photosynthesis – energy. That tender stem reaches ever higher, reaching for the sun. It begins to straighten and shoot up quickly. Do you feel the warmth of the sun?

Now pick up one of your drawing tools and draw a stem. Or a trunk. Anywhere on the paper you feel drawn to. Just a simple line is fine, or you may feel a branching stem growing up.

Now reflect on some of the images of your journey today. What is coming forth from you? What emotions are you experiencing? All emotions are just fine. Just sit with them. Notice them. Where are you feeling energy? Where are you feeling resistance? Don't try to fix anything, or discard anything. Just notice what you're feeling, where the energy is flowing, where it stops.

Now as you hold that energy, start to add to your plant. Is it a flower? What color does that flower need to be? Is that flower small or is it large? How complex is your flower, just a few simple petals or does it have many layers? How big is the center of your flower? Is there fruit on your plant? Or maybe seeds? What is your plant producing? Maybe it's more leaves or branches or vines.

Now return to your energy and your emotions. Are there new layers rising? Is your energy or your vision growing and expanding? Is your flower getting bigger? Are there more seeds on your plant? Or do you have roots that are burrowing deeper into the dark? Maybe all your energy is going into developing new leaves that will create more energy. Maybe there are vines that cling to other plants.

Expand your plant or flower to represent the energy you are feeling. Where is your flower or plant growing? Is it branching or is it putting all its emotional energy into one area?

Now ask yourself how you are to engage with this energy. Is there something that needs to heal? Something that needs to grow? Is there something that needs to be dormant for a while? Does something need to be pruned? Listen to what your plant is telling you. Challenge yourself to hear its message and to respond.

Continue to add to your plant. Are there words that need to be added or is your plant purely visual? Does it need more roots or seeds or leaves? Does it need pattern or more color? Let simple marks become a complex form. Grow your plant as big as you need to. Draw for as long as you like. Keep feeling what is growing within you.

When this plant is done, turn your paper over and date and sign it. Use this space on the back of your drawing to reflect on what is growing. Close your eyes and rest.

This is one small step. What will grow out of this day, this journey?

We will go into breakout rooms now, but you are invited to add more plants to your page. You may want to add a plant or flower daily. Build a garden. Move towards clarity and action and away from resistance.